

Pam Presbyterian church in the U.S.A.
Af. West Board of foreign missions.
Cameroon

NOW IN CAMEROON WEST AFRICA



NOW IN CAMEROUN, WEST AFRICA

Pioneering always connotes ruggedness and initiative. Pioneering in the Christian ministry is no exception; in fact the Christian ministry is always pioneering — opening or preparing a way for others, trying new methods of ministering to the whole need of men. Our church began this sort of pioneering on the west coast of Africa in 1832 when John Pinney was sent to Liberia.

From that time down to the present, sturdy pioneers have braved the hazards of African climate and manifold threats to health, and have planted a living church in the forest of Cameroun. Many names, illustrious in mission history, star the list, and many have paid the full price for their pioneering, but today God's Word, the greatest weapon against paganism, is waging war against the old religions of fear, fetishism, animism, Mohammedanism, and the ever present mammonism which recently has become one of the major problems the missionary has to face.

The Heart

The Church in the Cameroun carries out its program under the directorship of over seventy well-trained African pastors and a number of able evangelists. Because the people of West Africa live in villages averaging fifty to a hundred souls, far enough apart to provide plenty of territory for hunting and the making of new gardens, it is impossible to provide an ordained minister for each of the thousands of villages. However, each village likes to have its own little chapel and primary school. In most cases the same hut is used for both purposes, although the larger towns are building more pretentious houses for church and school.

When a pastor is called to a certain church, his responsibility extends far beyond the village in which the main church building is to be found. There may be twenty or thirty "preaching points" directly related to that one church organization. At least three times a year church members from all these surrounding villages congregate at the central church for two or three days of pre-Communion services. In between these special services, the village Christian communities are served by the evangelists, men without enough education or ability to qualify as pastors. Each Presbytery has a training school for these evangelists, some of whom act as day school teachers for the little church primary schools.



The president of the missionary society speaking to the group — giving Bible talk.

The missionary pastor serves, to a large extent, in an advisory capacity and as an evangelist at large. The actual task of evangelism falls on the capable shoulders of the African pastor and his corps of evangelists, although the Gospel is so vital a part of the life of many church members that personal workers, groups of women and men, are constantly seeking to win others to Christ.

Missionary zeal is not lacking. The Church in Cameroun realizes that there are many tribes and people beyond the confines of the Presbyteries who have not as yet heard the Gospel. Once a year they celebrate the date of arrival of the first missionary in the interior, and at a service of thanksgiving they take up an offering to finance their young men who have left home to work in the regions beyond.

The Mind

Ever since the setting up of the French Government after the first world war, most schools have been carried on in the French language. As has been stated, many of the churches maintain a small primary school in which every youngster in the village has the opportunity to learn to read and write in his own language. French Colonial policy is





*First choice of the tin cans is the reward for the boy who learns
Bible verses best in Mr. Georges Anker's class.*

aimed at the development of French citizens within the Empire. It is natural that this policy should discourage the study of the vernacular and concentrate on the French language, so in recent years many of the little vernacular schools have given way to French speaking primary schools. This presents a problem to the Church, as it is difficult to find young men or women equipped with a sufficient knowledge of French to conduct such a school.

In the primary schools the Bible, in the vernacular, is the accepted text book and throughout the whole school system, even in the higher grades where the Government curriculum is followed, Bible instruction is emphasized. There are sufficient village primary schools but the Mission simply cannot accept all the applicants for middle school training; the necessary equipment and trained personnel are lacking. The process becomes more selective as the students advance. Those who finally are accepted for the Normal School or the newly formed Cameroun Christian College must show, through all these years of development, a sound mind, a dedication to their task and Christian devotion. One of the problems facing both Mission and Church is that of meeting the insistent demands of those young men and women who are pleading for further training in some school.

The Cameroun Christian College, still in its infancy, living in temporary quarters and African huts, has graduated its first two classes of what corresponds in this country to Junior College grade. Another class is being added this year and in due time students will be graduated with full college training. These young men and women will find openings of high responsibility



*Libamba. Site of New Cameroun Christian College.
Temporary Dormitories*

awaiting them when they graduate, some in government positions, some in the ministry or other professions. The great problem that faces them is to maintain a high type of Christian discipleship once they leave the Christian environment. But the leadership of emerging Africa is being molded in this and similar institutions.

The Hand

Deeply conscious of the wide gap that separates the "educated" from the "primitive", the Mission has for years maintained the Frank James Industrial School where every kind of manual training that can find an application in African life is offered. Automobile mechanics, carpenters, masons, tailors and shoemakers have left this school to set up their shops in all parts of Cameroun and beyond. Many of them have been staunch evangelists as well as good tradesmen, and little Christian groups have been developed in non-Christian localities where they have started work. At first it was difficult to find anyone who had progressed in his general education to enter this school, but as the demand for skilled workers increased with consequent increases in wages, and as the entrance requirements of the school were raised, a new type of school is emerging to meet the new day in Africa.

Every student of Africa laments the fact that missions have done relatively little in agriculture. About ninety percent of the people depend on their gardens for their very life and they have to supply the increasing demands of the rapidly developing cities. Growth is rapid in the tropics, anything stuck in the ground will grow, but the frightful waste of time and energy in burning off new jungle land to replace worn out clearings, with the fatal results of soil erosion, demands immediate attention.



Classroom in Foullassi Normal School. Mural decorations made by students.

To add to the difficulties in Cameroun, the dread tsetse fly makes it impossible to raise cattle. Some six years ago one of our missionaries attacked this problem and by a tedious and discouraging series of experiments is trying to develop a herd of cattle that will build up an immunity to the fatal trypanosome.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all is the universal problem of inspiring young men to go back to the farms and to accept agriculture as an honorable profession demanding the very best in man. One earnest young student, seeing under the microscope for the first time the pests that were destroying his crops, exclaimed, "Some of us accepted the Gospel in our hearts, but when we saw our crops destroyed by blight, it was easy to turn again to our old superstitious fetishes hoping to ward off the evil spirits, but now I see it is no evil spirit but these little pests that take away our food. This destroys superstition."

The Body

From the very first the West Africa Missions have been engaged in the stupendous task of ministering to the physical needs of the pitifully vulnerable people of Cameroun. The justly famous Central Hospital at Elat is taxed to its capacity almost every day. Operations are carried on in accordance with the well developed systems of mass production and with amazingly little post-operative infection considering the primitive wards available. Another large hospital at Sakhayeme draws patients from far up and down the West Coast of Africa. There never are enough doctors to go around, nor are there nurses available to care for the sick. A large force of African assistants has been trained to help the missionary doctor. Without their



Lepers at Njazen drawing lots to see whether they will be in the treatment or the control group, for the experimentation with the new treatment for Leprosy.

skill and devotion the elaborate medical service of the Mission, reaching out to every one of the fifteen stations, would be impossible. During the last war, when the supply of Mission doctors was cut off, these loyal men and women shouldered the major part of the responsibility. Some of them are skilled surgeons without benefit of a medical degree. These men are now pleading for a chance to get some formal education so that they will no longer be classed as mere "assistants" but as doctors in their own right.

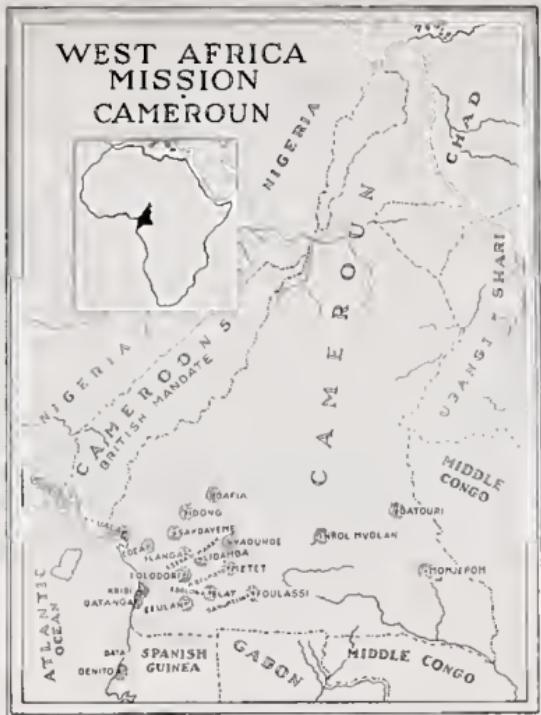
The French Government is performing a commendable service in its routine inspection of every individual in sleeping sickness areas. With the financial aid of the American Mission to Lepers a new attack is being made on leprosy, with two couples assigned to that specific work. Clinics are being held in many places to train the Africans on preventive measures and sanitary precautions that can be applied in the village.

Over the years a corps of skilled dentists has been developed at Central Hospital in Elat, and a complete dental clinic will soon be in operation there. A mobile dental unit from Central Hospital makes regular trips to strategic points and is always met by many in need of attention.

The relief of suffering has become one of the mighty evangelizing forces of the Mission. Help is given to all who come and to all is presented the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, the Great Physician. Many accept Him.

Plans are under way to provide a similar service in the vast eastern part of Cameroun, as yet without regular medical help. The possibility of carrying out these plans depends largely on desperately needed personnel. It cannot be done with the force now on the field.

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